

Dear Minister Granter,

On behalf of the Newfoundland and Labrador Trappers Association (NLTA), I welcome you in your new role as Minister responsible for wildlife. We look forward to working cooperatively with your office to improve the lot of trappers and trapping in our province.

Back in February of this year, we wrote your predecessor, Joan Shea, in the hope of initiating a review of trapper cabin policy in NL. Your Crown Lands division employs an archaic policy in allowance of trapper's cabins, and it is sorely lacking in the aspects of health, sanitation and occupational health and safety parameters.

Initially we were optimistic that a thorough review would commence, and that we would be provided an opportunity to contribute to a modern policy that was mutually satisfactory to both NLTA and your agency.

Unfortunately, there appears to be no spirit of good will and participation on behalf of your Crown Lands agency toward this realization. In fact, since we have made our review request, we have yet to be formally contacted and your agency has initiated collection procedures against a 74 year old trapper, Gerald Spencer of Glenwood, who was one of the founding fathers of NLTA back in 1977.

In most Canadian provinces, a trapper is entitled to a series of cabins placed strategically along the trapline. There is a minimal, if any fee, to cover the permitting of such a series of cabins. These structures are an essential tool of a commercial trapline, and can mean the difference between life and death in the event of a mishap.

In this province, each cabin requires its own individual permit, at an annual cost of \$113. In Gerald's case, he had three such registered cabins and a fourth unregistered. In Gerald's case, these are all very modest small one-room structures of less than 10 by 10 foot size, more appropriately referred to as "tilts". The Lands Division saw fit to post the unregistered cabin in late winter after Gerald's trapping season had ended, and subsequently burned the cabin before Gerald's return the following fall. All his traps and related equipment were allowed to burn with the structure.

The Crown Lands trapper cabin fee initially was considered a commercial permit to occupy, and the fee was \$5 plus HST. This was a reasonable cost to trappers, including Gerald. Some years ago, the fee was increased to \$113 plus HST. This is an unreasonable fee, particularly in the case of multiple cabins such as in Gerald's situation, and this cost was a significant expense against the marginal income derived from fur trapping.

Gerald approached his MHA, Mr. Kevin O'Brien, to solicit his assistance on resolving the outstanding debt that Crown Lands had imposed on him for arrears on trapline cabin payment. Mister O'Brien wrote a letter on Gerald's behalf to then responsible Minister Tom Osborne, seeking direction on how Gerald could resolve this matter. This letter did not generate a response from the Minister's office.

It is the contention of NLTA that Crown Lands acted unfairly and prematurely in pursuing Mr. Spencer's account given that Spencer had himself voluntarily approached provincial authorities to seek a mutually satisfactory resolution.

The fact that Lands has aggressively pursued this file since NLTA's request for a trapper cabin policy review is indicative of the arrogant and indifferent attitude displayed by this agency. We encourage you to look at trapper cabin policies of Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, among others, where the trapping industry is held in high regard. We then ask you to compare those policies with the archaic, make it up as you go policy employed for the past three or more decades in this province.

WE ask your intervention in this matter on behalf of Mr. Gerald Spencer. Further, NLTA entered this dialogue in a spirit of good will and provided Lands with policies of other jurisdictions as a starting point for a new NL policy. To all appearances we have been both ignored and have had retaliatory action taken against one of our founding fathers as a "reward" of our action.

In your capacity as Minister responsible for both Lands and wildlife, we ask for your intervention so that we can restore a cooperative spirit and continue with the process we initiated in February 2014.

Respectfully yours,

Ken White, President